

# Comm[unity] Centered: People, Places & Play in Ramsey

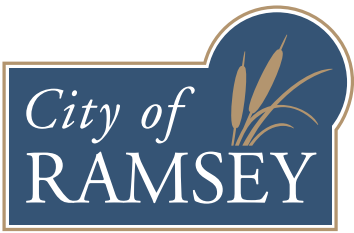


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The project on which this report is based was completed in collaboration with the City of Ramsey as part of the 2017–2018 Resilient Communities Project (RCP) partnership. RCP is a program at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) that connects University faculty and students with Minnesota communities to address strategic projects that advance local resilience and sustainability.

The contents of this report represent the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of RCP, CURA, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, or the City of Ramsey.



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**Resilient Communities Project**

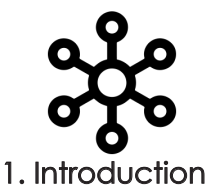
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# Comm[UNITY] Centered

People, Places & Play in Ramsey



What type of community center will best serve Ramsey's residents?

A DESIRE FOR A COMMUNITY CENTER



The desire for a **community center** in Ramsey is reflected in the City's 2016 Community Livability Report and several planning documents: the City's Strategic Action Plan, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and The COR Master Plan.

A SITE FOR A COMMUNITY CENTER



The City of Ramsey has **up to 12 acres of land available, potentially for free**, in its downtown area (The COR) that could be used for a stand-alone community center or the hub of satellite centers.

FUNDS FOR A COMMUNITY CENTER



According to The COR: Market Panel Discussion, Ramsey has identified a **\$4,000,000 contribution** to a community center with their 10-year Capital Improvement Plan.

THE CHALLENGE



While there is a strong resident interest in a community center and the idea has been generally discussed by the Ramsey City Council, there has been **no in-depth planning, budgeting, or community engagement** for developing a community center vision.

OUR GOAL



Our goal is to provide the City of Ramsey **with a set of recommendations** that will assist the City in developing a **long-term vision and strategy** for a community center model & associated programming.

OUR APPROACH



Our **recommendations for Ramsey** include an analysis of existing community resources, demographic information, and facilities and programs offered in other cities.

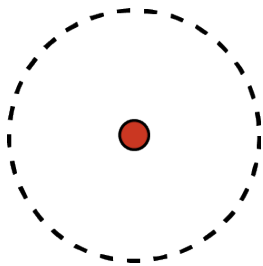
TOWARDS A COMMUNITY CENTER: GEOGRAPHIC MODELS & GOVERNANCE STRATEGIES

Ramsey is currently considering several **geographic models** and **governance strategies** to determine a suitable approach for providing a traditional community center or components of community-center services dispersed across the city. Below is a summary of these models and strategies.

Geographic Models

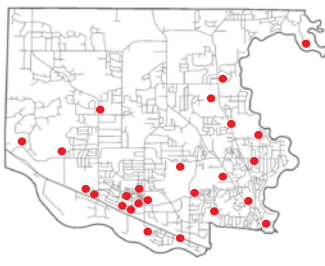
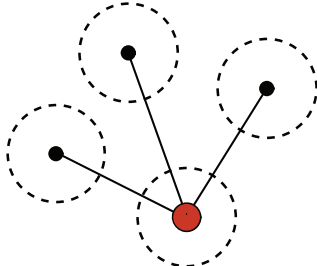
Geographic models provide the City of Ramsey the opportunity to consider more than one option for where they could locate their community center and how they could offer community-center services to ensure that these services reach a large population.

Centralized Model



The centralized model is based on a **traditional stand-alone community center** where multiple uses and services are provided **under one roof**. As depicted in the map, the 12-acre parcel allocated in the mixed-use downtown area (The COR) could be a potential site for a centralized community center.

Satellite Model



The satellite model allows community-center services to be **dispersed across the city with one location operating as the hub**. As indicated on the map, places where infrastructure and amenities already exist can operate as satellite centers across Ramsey.

Governance Strategies

Governance strategies provide the City of Ramsey the opportunity to consider more than one option for how they want to operate their community center. These strategies can offer cost-effective ways to provide amenities and programs that are affordable to all residents.



Municipal Model

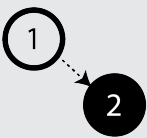
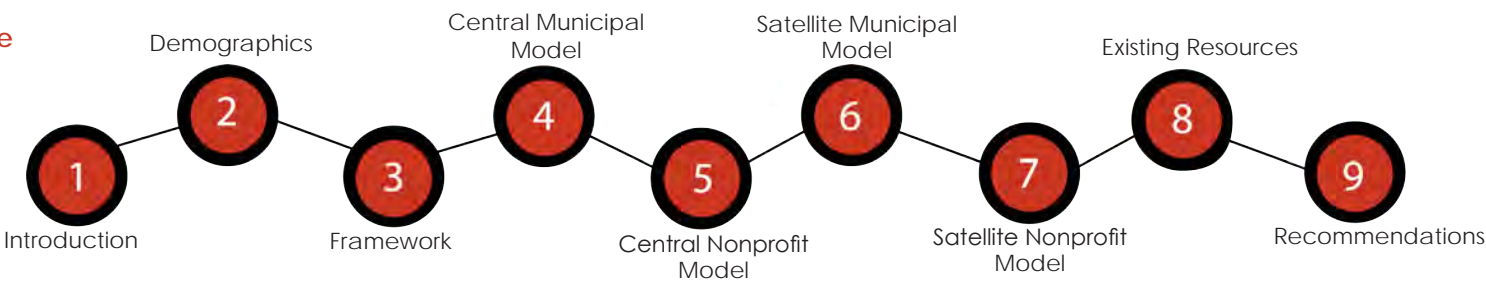
This is a community center **owned and run by a city**. These community centers typically offer programs and amenities free of charge or at a low cost to local residents.



Nonprofit Model

This is a community center **owned and/or run by a nonprofit organization**. Cities can partner with nonprofits to offer community-center services that typically require membership.

Project Outline

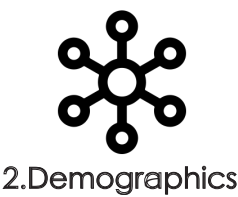


**Thinking about a Community Center for Ramsey:** Ultimately, the community center or centers that offer services should be **quality public spaces** that include opportunities for **physical activity, leisure, recreation, and learning**; and **improve the overall quality of life and wellbeing** of residents in Ramsey. In the subsequent posters, we will discuss **Ramsey's demographics, geographic models and governance strategies used by other cities**, and **existing community resources** to provide **recommendations for developing a community center model** that would serve the **needs and interests of all residents** in Ramsey.



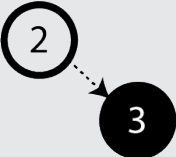
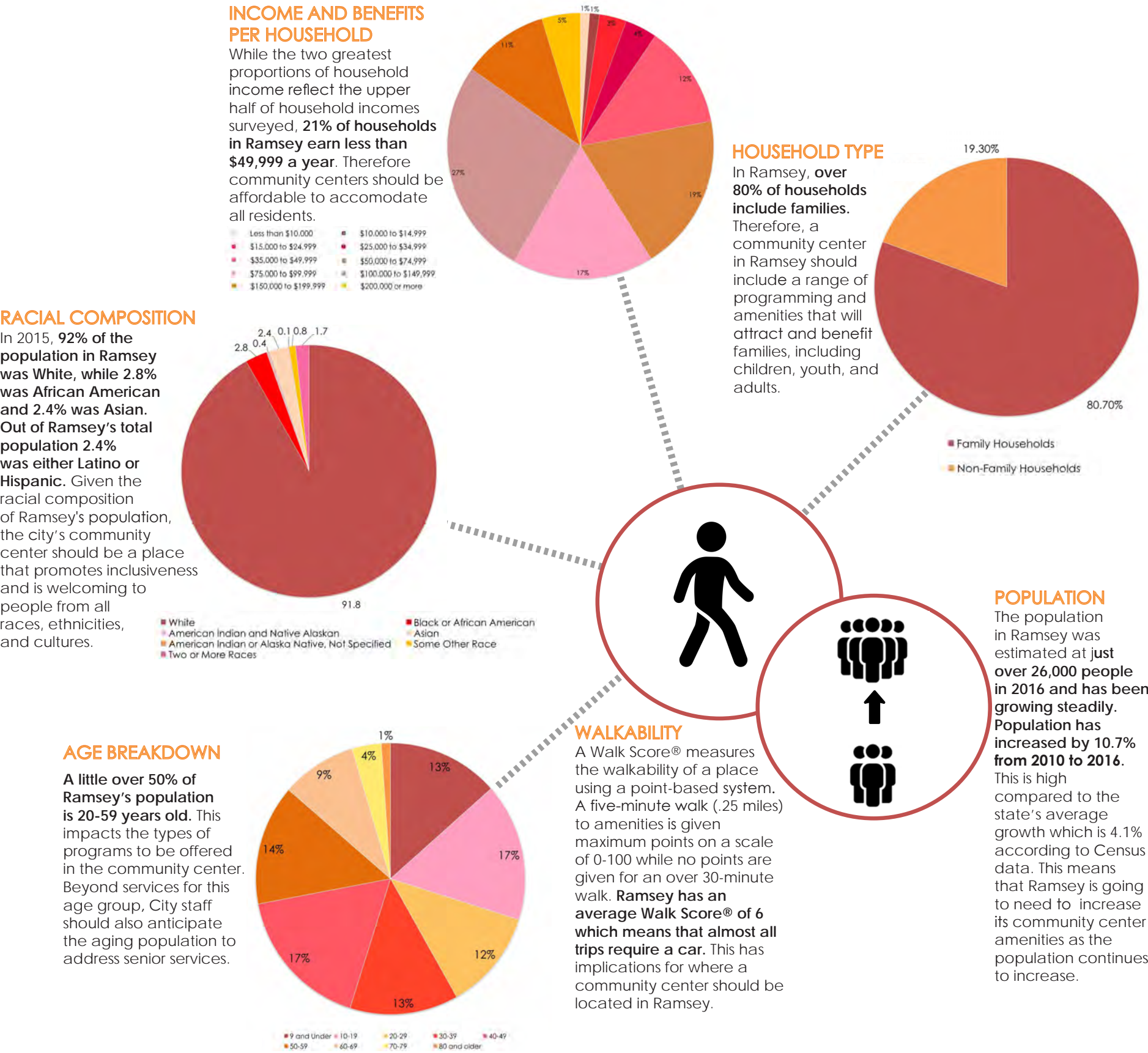
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People, Places & Play in Ramsey



## RAMSEY'S DEMOGRAPHIC MAKEUP

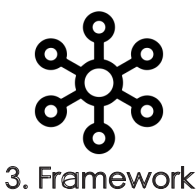
To make recommendations for community center models and governance strategies, we must first **understand the demographic makeup** of the city of Ramsey through Census data. Below we illustrate Ramsey's **walkability index**, **population growth**, and **demographic composition**. Understanding these unique conditions will **help us frame our recommendations** for a community center in Ramsey.



**Demographic Considerations for Implementation:** Considering that almost all trips in Ramsey are taken by car, **parking will be an important factor** in the building of a community center. Offering **family memberships** will also be pertinent because about 80% of the households in Ramsey are families. Income may come into play when determining membership prices for the community center. In the next poster, **we will discuss the social, economic, and environmental benefits** of community centers and how each geographic model could present both advantages and challenges.

# Comm[UNITY] Centered

## People, Places & Play in Ramsey



3. Framework

### A COMMUNITY CENTER FRAMEWORK

Community centers provide **safe, affordable, and quality places** for residents to enjoy opportunities for **physical activity, recreation, education, arts and culture, and leisure**. Such places serve as year-round gathering places that facilitate **multigenerational and intercultural interaction** and offer attractions for community members with different interests.

#### Creating Resiliency through Community Centers

An integration of **social, economic, and environmental benefits** is key to creating a resilient community center model that is also viable and equitable. Below are some of the social, economic, and environmental benefits of having community centers.

#### Social Benefits

- ✓ Create community awareness through social interaction.
- ✓ Increase opportunities for physical activity and healthy living.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for learning and education.
- ✓ Enable integration of residents of all ages, cultures, and incomes.

#### Economic Benefits

- ✓ Create a stimulus for local businesses to offer services.
- ✓ Offer affordable access to community amenities and programs.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for employment.
- ✓ Potentially increase value of neighboring properties.

#### Environmental Benefits

- ✓ Increase access to outdoor spaces.
- ✓ Support cleaner, greener, and safer public places.
- ✓ Create opportunities for programs that increase environmental awareness.
- ✓ Can support environmental and habitat protection e.g. rain gardens.

### Assessing Geographic Models

When considering a location for a centralized community center or satellite centers, it is important to consider **residents' accessibility** to each location. Ideally, community centers should be located in **pedestrian and bicycle friendly neighborhoods instead of locations that require residents to drive**. Given that Ramsey is a **car-dependent city** and that there is **no public transportation within the city**, City staff must be strategic about where they locate their community center. **The COR could offer a unique opportunity** for locating a centralized community center or the hub of satellite centers. The following illustrations and discussion of potential advantages and disadvantages of each of these models provide a **framework for assessing which model** would work best for Ramsey.

#### Centralized Model

#### Satellite Model

Walking proximity  
Bicycling proximity  
Driving proximity

- + Serves as a **one-stop shop** for accessing multiple community amenities and programs.
- Finding an **easily accessible central location** for the stand-alone community center may be difficult.

- + Maintenance and operational costs are limited to one building.
- Limited **employment opportunities** and **limited options** for local businesses to become involved.

- + Able to offer **environmental awareness programs** and **hands-on learning** opportunities.
- There may be **limited opportunity for expanding access to green spaces** such as parks.

Walking proximity  
Bicycling proximity  
Driving proximity

- + Increased access to community center **amenities dispersed across multiple locations**.
- Residents **might not find all the amenities they need under one roof**.

- + More **opportunities for employment** and **affordable access** to a variety of amenities and programs.
- Maintenance and operational costs may increase due to multiple locations.

- + Using existing buildings may **reduce the amount of total resources** needed.
- May **require more land**, contributing to sprawl and inefficient land uses.

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**Considering Costs and Benefits:** The City of Ramsey should consider the **social, economic, and environmental benefits and costs** of both the centralized and satellite community center models when determining which geographic model to use. The **municipal and nonprofit governance strategies** discussed in the subsequent posters will provide examples of **how other cities are using these strategies to mitigate the disadvantages and increase the advantages** associated with each of the geographic models.



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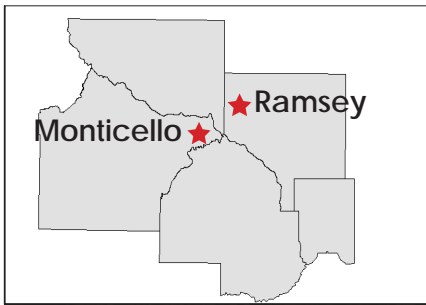
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### CENTRALIZED MUNICIPAL MODEL

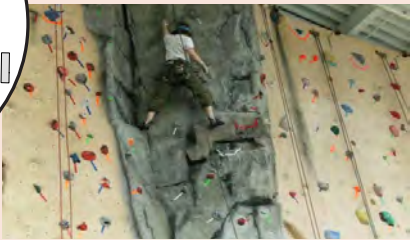
Centralized municipal community centers are a popular model in Minnesota and across the United States. **Municipalities benefit from complete control over amenities as well as the programming offered.** A single, centralized location offers a wide variety of programming in a central space. However, the disadvantages of this model include high cost and limited accessibility. Municipalities often find it challenging to fund the operation and the construction of a standalone community center entirely through the City budget.

#### Monticello, MN



#### Unique Community Center Attributes

- **Amenities:** free walking track, fitness center, pool, senior center, climbing wall, rental facility, community garden
- **Construction Cost:** \$12 million
- **Operating Cost:** \$2.4 million
- **Programming:** movies in the park, local farmers' market, Bertram Blast Triathlon, adult sports leagues



The construction of the community center building cost Monticello \$12.5 million in total, but the **National Guard contributed \$2.5 million and the City received an additional \$500,000 in Cleanup Grants funds.**



Monticello's community needs assessment led them to build unique features in their community center. A climbing wall and a senior center are evidence that the **different populations in their community were being heard when deciding which amenities to construct.**



The **Cleanup Grants funds** that Monticello received for their construction practices as well as their community garden follow the ideals of an environmentally friendly facility.

For more information see: <http://bit.ly/2BEy2Bi>

Note: The information provided on this poster is based on interviews with City staff and information made available on the City website.

#### Shoreview, MN



#### Unique Community Center Attributes

- **Construction Cost:** \$27.5 million invested incrementally (\$9 mil., \$5.5 mil, \$13 mil.)
- **Amenities:** indoor water park, fitness center, indoor play area, outdoor pavillion, gymnasium
- **Operating Costs:** \$2.5 million  
**Revenue:** \$2.5 million

**Owner/Operator:** Shoreview



**Shoreview built its community center using an incremental approach.** The City built a 90,000-square-foot community center in 1990 for \$9 million. As the community needs became more apparent they added two large expansions. In 2003, there was a \$5.5 million expansion that increased the size of the building to 110, 000 square feet. Currently, Shoreview is working on a \$15 million expansion that will increase the total size of the community center to be between 130,000 and 140,000 square feet.



**Shoreview advocates healthy lifestyles** beyond promoting sports clubs and fitness classes. By hosting farmers' markets, the Active Life Fair, and active seniors groups, Shoreview is making health about more than just fitness.

For more information see: <http://bit.ly/2jOoyj8>

Note: The information provided on this poster is based on interviews with City staff and information made available on the City website.

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**Unique Funding Opportunities and Incremental Growth:** Monticello and Shoreview offer examples of large community centers that have been constructed and operated by their respective municipalities. If Ramsey were to pursue this model they should investigate funding options such as grants and partners, as the financial burden may rest solely with the City. **Ramsey has identified a large physical space for a community center, and if Ramsey chooses to build a small community center, there would be ample room for growth as needs are identified.** In our next poster, we investigate the centralized nonprofit model.



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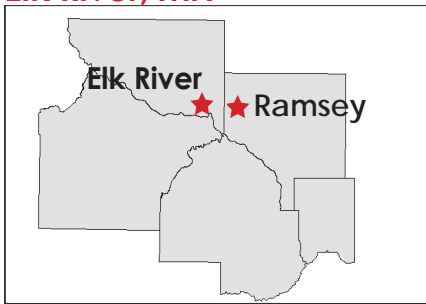
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## CENTRALIZED NONPROFIT MODEL

Nonprofit partnerships are a commonly used strategy for managing the various costs related to operating a community center. **Cities typically form unique relationships with nonprofits, including YMCAs, through use agreements and other formal cost-sharing agreements.** The operational cost of community centers is a large burden for a city to be wholly responsible for, therefore, nonprofits geared toward providing youth and other specialized programming offer attractive partnership/sponsorship opportunities for cities.

### Elk River, MN



#### Unique Community Center Attributes

- **Amenities:** waterslide, whirlpool, basketball court, lap pool, sauna, kitchen, weight room
- **Construction Cost:** \$19 million
- **Yearly Operating Cost:** \$4 million yearly revenues: > \$4 million
- **Use Agreement:** The City is allotted 20 hours a week during off-peak gym hours to offer their own programming.



Elk River funded the construction of their community center, which cost roughly \$19 million. **The City worked with BWBR Architects, Inc. to obtain Legacy Landfill grant rebates, saving the City more than \$1 million through recycling rebates.**



**In exchange for leasing their building for free, the YMCA pays for operating costs while allowing Elk River 20 hours of gym time per week to offer their own programming.** The combined programming from the YMCA and the City affords residents access to a wide variety of programming in a single central location.

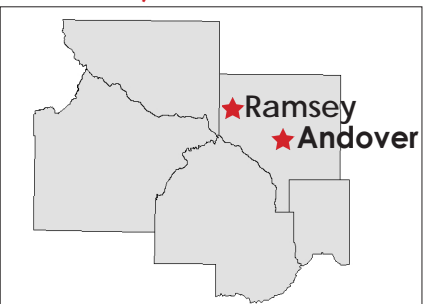


**The unique grants and rebates that Elk River secured are substantial** and contribute toward constructing a community center that is built around environmental awareness.

For more information see: <http://bit.ly/2BFnOR4>

Note: The information provided on this poster is based on interviews with City staff and YMCA staff, and information made available on their respective websites including the BWBR Architects, Inc. website.

### Andover, MN



#### Unique Community Center Attributes

- **Construction Cost:** \$18.2 million
- **Operating Budget:** \$1 million
- **Amenities:** ice arena, meeting rooms, field house. YMCA offers: lap pool, kids gym, family locker rooms, sauna
- **Programming:** senior and pre-K programming, volleyball, youth sports. YMCA offers: health classes, and free childcare for members



Andover has a unique partnership with YMCA Twin Cities. **The City operates facilities such as the ice arena and field house, while the YMCA operates the pool and the kids' gym.**



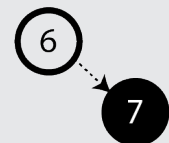
A visitor need not be a YMCA member or a resident of Andover to use the field house or the ice arena. Therefore the community center has the **potential to attract business from outside of the community.**



Although the City of Andover was unable to secure a substantial amount of contributions through a citywide fund-raiser, **alternative forms of funding—such as in-kind and monetary donations, and grants—provide valuable opportunities for cities to fund their community centers.**

For more information see: <http://bit.ly/2AeooZP>

Note: The information provided on this poster is based on interviews with City staff and YMCA staff, and information made available on their respective websites.



**Operational Costs and Use Agreements:** Andover and Elk River demonstrate unique opportunities for use agreements within a centralized nonprofit model. **This model may place the burden of construction costs entirely on the City of Ramsey, however, partnering with nonprofits such as the YMCA makes a centralized community center model a viable option because it can help mitigate operational costs.** Also, the YMCA brings a wealth of experience in community center creation and would be a logical nonprofit partner. Ramsey can negotiate unique use agreements with the YMCA or any other nonprofit organization it partners with to either lease the entire building or parts of the building to offer programming. In the next poster, we will investigate the satellite municipal model.

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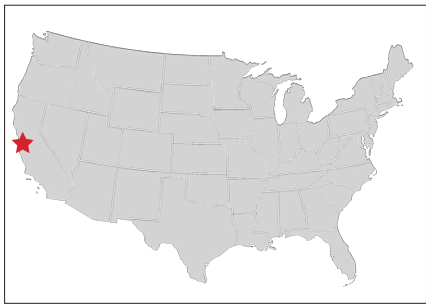
## People, Places & Play in Ramsey



### SATELLITE MUNICIPAL MODEL

A satellite municipal model **allows community center services to be dispersed across several different locations** with a community center hub located in a central location. Each node or satellite location can be designed to **offer specialized community center programming** based on already available resources and/or resident needs. Offering community center **services in more than one location can increase accessibility** to facilities and programming. In this poster, we will discuss how the municipal model **allows the City to capitalize on existing resources and tailor the model to the specific needs of the city.**

#### San Jose, CA



#### Unique Community Center Attributes

- **Amenities and programming:** classroom rentals, banquet hall, Youth Center, parks, trails, youth basketball and soccer, half gymnasium, summer camp
- **Partnership:** The Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services has a facility re-use program that allows City-owned buildings to be re-used by nonprofit and community based organizations to offer services that benefit residents.
- **Opportunities:** Although San Jose is a vastly different city compared to Ramsey, there are still important takeaways from their satellite municipal model.

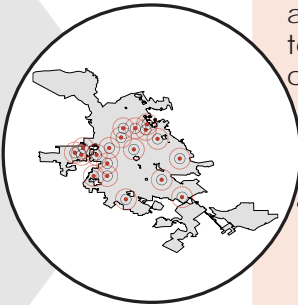


San Jose's community center model is unique in regard to their **facility re-use program**. This program **gives government agencies, nonprofits, and community based organizations access** to selected satellite community centers to operate programs and offer services that primarily **benefit city residents**.

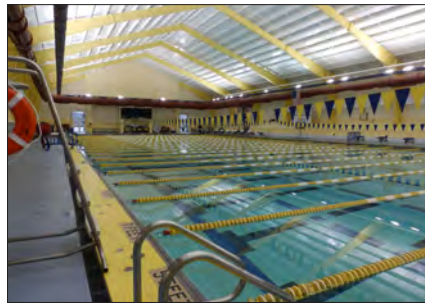
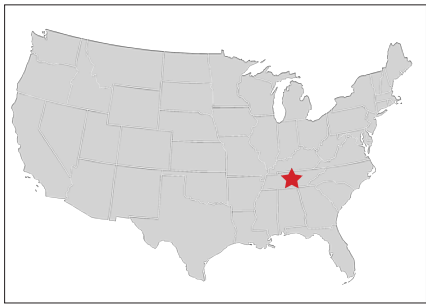


This allows the City to **strategically manage operational costs**, provide a wide variety of programming, re-use or re-service City facilities, and **expand relationships with service providers**.

See here for more information: <http://bit.ly/2loGj4r>



#### Williamson County, TN



#### Unique Community Center Attributes

- **Programming:** Arts & crafts for children, teens, and adults; dance and music classes, summer camps, theater programs, movie nights, game nights, sports camps, senior fitness programs, aquatics, therapeutics
- **Sponsorships:** SilverSneakers, Silver&Fit, Barre Fitness, Nancy Stevens, Wellness Coaching, STAR Physical Therapy
- **Satellite Centers:** Hillsboro/Leipers Fork Community Center, College Grove Community Center, Bethesda Recreation Center

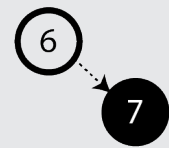
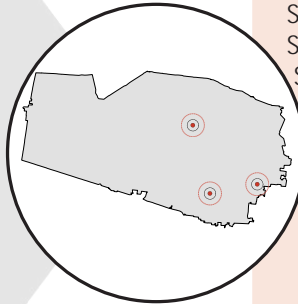


Cities and counties in the suburbs of Nashville have been able to **collaborate across several community and recreation centers** to create satellite centers, allowing the smaller cities to **benefit from shared resources** and offer a wider variety of amenities and programming.



Williamson County Parks and Recreation has **partnerships with several local businesses and nonprofits** that support their programs through monetary donations and by providing needed goods and services. The County offers their **sponsors recognition** in various media sources and public engagement.

For more information see: <http://bit.ly/1yrYkUz>

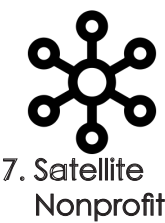


**Cost Efficiency through Partnerships:** If Ramsey chooses to adopt a municipal satellite model, the City can **re-use several of its city-owned facilities** by allowing **local businesses and community based organizations to offer programs** that are currently in need. These existing facilities and community spaces can easily serve as satellite centers that offer components of a community center. Another alternative would be to **connect with neighboring cities to expand programming**. The City can also **develop a sponsorship policy** that will allow for more formal partnerships with service providers. The next poster presents examples of how cities have used nonprofit partnerships to better meet community needs.



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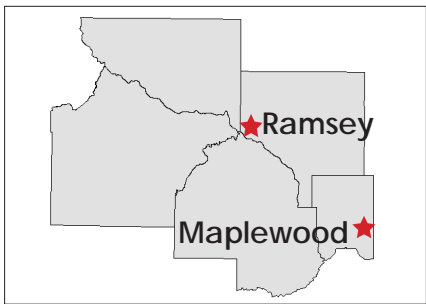
## People, Places & Play in Ramsey



### SATELLITE NONPROFIT MODEL

In a nonprofit satellite model, some or all of the satellite centers, including its hub, **can be owned and/or operated by a nonprofit organization**. Cities can also **partner with nonprofits** to provide facilities and programming that the City may not be able to offer otherwise. The following examples highlight how cities have partnered with nonprofits to offer **services that meet the needs and desires of their communities** while also **finding effective strategies to manage costs**.

#### Maplewood, MN



##### Unique Community Center Attributes

- **Memorandum of Understanding:** agreement between the Parks and Recreation Board and the YMCA in 2016.
- **Amenities:** 3 gyms, fitness center, 9 ice skating rinks, aquatic center, picnic shelters, and nature center
- **Satellite Centers:** Cater Community Gym, Edgerton Community Gym, Maplewood Community Nature Center, and neighboring parks
- **Partnerships:** YMCA, local elementary school, Jr. Polar Football, Maplewood Area Historical Society, NEU Soccer Club, North Polars Fastpitch



The City of Maplewood has a variety of **partnerships with local nonprofits and community organizations** which allow the City to provide specific programming **without having to commit additional staffing and be responsible for all costs**.

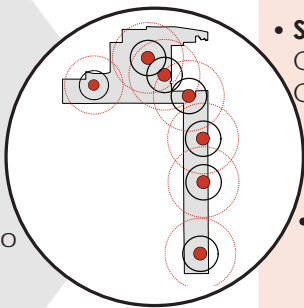


The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) enables the City to provide its building while all operational costs are covered by the YMCA. This strategic partnership has helped the City to **broaden their services and effectively respond to the net loss** they were experiencing.



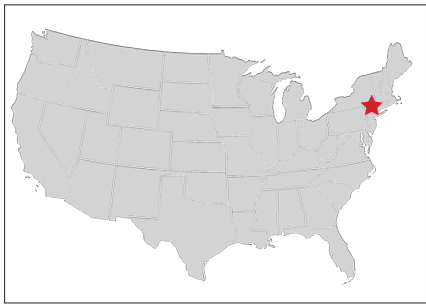
By offering programming through satellite centers, the City has also been able to **bring activities and programs closer** to its residents.

For more information see: <http://bit.ly/2BEdhFw>



Note: The information provided on this poster is based on interviews with City staff and information made available on the City website.

#### Queens, NY



##### Unique Community Center Attributes

- **Operation:** Run exclusively by Catholic Charities.
- **Amenities:** classrooms, meeting spaces, and worship spaces
- **Programming:** food pantry; educational programs for Latino children, youth, and families; programs for low-income parents; employment support programs; health education; and financial literacy
- **Opportunities:** While the geographic area is different from Ramsey, mainly in relation to population size, the model that is adopted across Queens still offers unique features that are applicable to Ramsey.

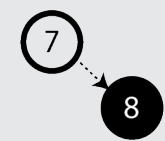
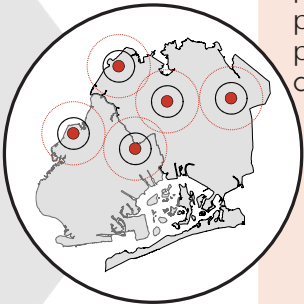


The community center in Queens offers **core social services including food and shelter; financial assistance; and youth and adult education to facilitate community empowerment**. This model exemplifies how community centers can incorporate **impactful programming that goes beyond traditional programming** by taking into consideration the **local context and unique needs of residents**.



Such programming can make community centers a **welcoming place for all residents**, especially for **socially disadvantaged and marginalized populations**.

For more information see: <http://bit.ly/2jhYr0R>



**Managing Costs and Addressing Needs:** The satellite geographic model and nonprofit governance strategies presented in this poster **highlight the advantages of partnerships in managing operational costs**, and ways in which community centers **can serve the unique needs of the community**. It is important that Ramsey **conduct meaningful community engagement at the grassroots level** to identify resident needs and develop programming that can benefit all populations. The next poster highlights existing community resources in Ramsey that can present valuable opportunities for partnerships and serve as satellite centers that offer specialized community services.

# Comm[UNITY] Centered

## People, Places & Play in Ramsey



### 8. Existing Resources

#### EXISTING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The City of Ramsey currently offers multiple community spaces with a range of facilities, amenities, and programming for outdoor recreation, physical activity, community gatherings, and leisure. The map and information presented below highlight six such community resources that include parks, playgrounds, sports fields, gymnasiums, meeting spaces, and event venues. These resources indicate the investments the City of Ramsey has already made in providing components of a traditional community center.



**Central Park**  
7925 161st Ave NW  
<http://bit.ly/2zDNixG>

- Outdoor pavilion and building
- Common area
- Playground
- Ice rinks with hockey nets
- Six softball fields



**The Draw**  
7401 E Ramsey Parkway  
<http://bit.ly/2i7Q9HW>

- Amphitheater
- Picnic tables
- Open green space
- Passive recreation programming
- Regional trails access



**Municipal Center**  
7550 Sunwood Dr NW A  
<http://bit.ly/2AiBroF>

- Five rentable meeting rooms
- Overhead projectors
- WiFi availability
- Multiple kitchens
- Flat screen TVs



**Ramsey Elementary**  
15000 County Hwy 5  
<http://bit.ly/2zV4brl>

- Two gymnasiums
- Outdoor fields
- Auditoriums
- Cafeterias and kitchens
- Classrooms



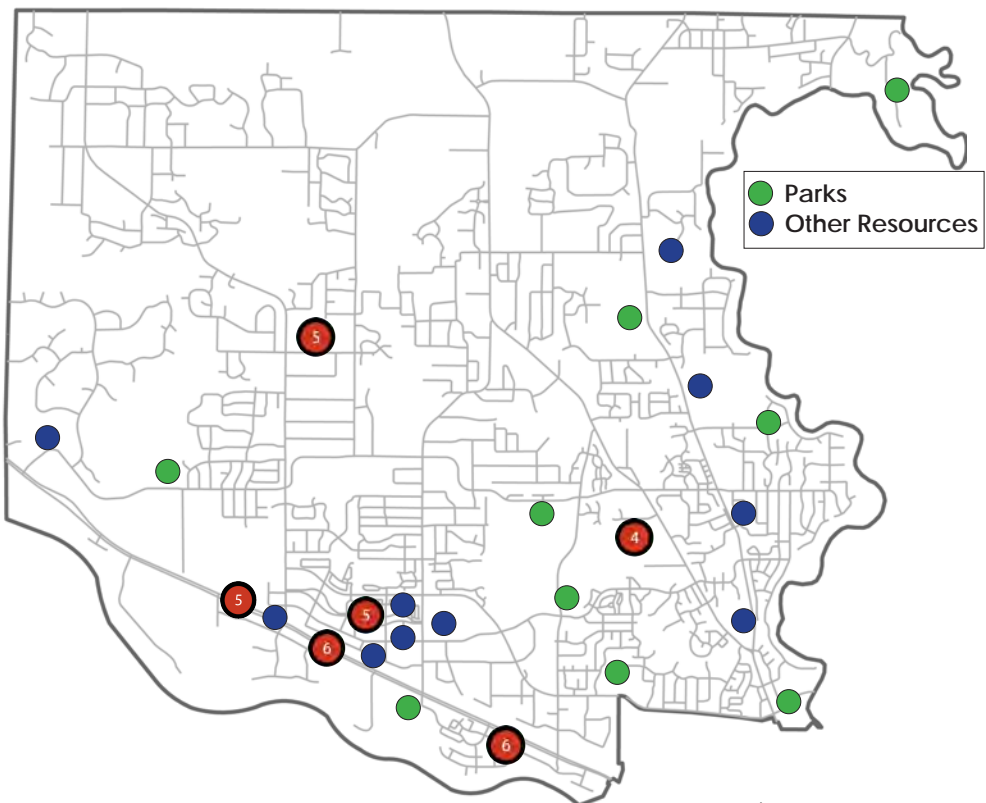
**Adrenaline Sports**  
SW Bunker & Armstrong Blvd.  
<http://bit.ly/2j7JXAB>

- Three basketball courts
- Three volleyball courts
- Three 80' x 170' turf fields
- 52,000 sq ft of rentable space
- Opens in January 2018



**Youth First**  
6701 Hwy 10 NW  
<http://bit.ly/2ik1bdm>

- Free afterschool programs
- Volunteer programs
- Teen movie nights
- Soccer field & volleyball court
- Outdoor recreation events

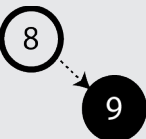


#### An expanded inventory of community resources

The list of community resources highlighted on the left of this poster is by no means comprehensive. Ramsey currently offers **myriad community resources that are already accessible to residents**. The locations of these resources and the types of facilities and programming offered provide **valuable considerations when envisioning a community center model for Ramsey**. Below are some additional outdoor spaces, facilities, and programming that could potentially be incorporated into the City's community center model.

**Parks and open spaces:** Ramsey has approximately **565 acres of parks and trail corridors**. Aside from Central Park and The Draw, several other City parks, including **Elmcrest, Alpine, Lake Itasca, Emerald Pond, Sun ish Lake, and Woodland Green**—and regional parks, including **Rum River Central Park and Mississippi West Regional Park**—offer facilities and space for both active and passive recreation. They also serve as gathering spaces for residents and provide a variety of amenities, including ones that are listed in the graphs above.

**Other facilities and programming:** Residents in Ramsey can access facilities and programming offered by several **privately run** institutions and businesses—including the **PACT Charter School, Anytime Fitness, Fountains of Ramsey, Links at Northfork Golf Course, Lord of Life Church, Northgate Church, Rum River Scout Camp, and Northern Starz Children's Theater**—to access a variety of facilities and programming, including gymnasiums, multi-purpose event rentals, outdoor activities, and performing arts programming that can benefit children, youth, and adults.

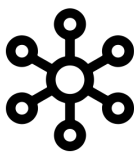


**Incorporating Existing Resources into the Community Center Model:** If the City of Ramsey pursues a satellite community center model, the City can **capitalize on existing community gathering spaces and facilities** to incorporate and expand components of a centralized community center. Having community center services dispersed throughout the city can also **increase access to resources for communities across Ramsey**. The City can repurpose already existing infrastructure and/or expand existing infrastructure to integrate community center resources that are currently lacking in Ramsey to meet the needs and desires of residents.



# Comm[UNITY] Centered

People, Places & Play in Ramsey



9. Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

This poster presents **important considerations for the City of Ramsey** as they move forward with in-depth planning for a community center model as well as associated programming and activities. Here we highlight **gaps in facilities and programming offered in Ramsey**, possible opportunities for **partnerships and funding**, a **framework for site selection**, and **recommended next steps** that will help the City develop a community center model that will **serve the needs and interests of all residents in Ramsey**.

Gaps in Facilities and Programming Offered in Ramsey

While the City has **not conducted a formal needs assessment**, the City's Parks and Recreation website includes a **survey** that allows residents to provide feedback on what recreation programs the City should offer. This feedback can **help inform the types of programs and amenities to include in a community center**. The following section categorizes gaps in current facilities and programs offered in Ramsey based on the survey responses, a comparison of facilities and activities offered in other cities explored in the project, and information obtained from key informants.

Facilities and activities for children and youth

- Splash pad
- Sports programs
- Music and theater
- More playgrounds
- Arts and crafts



Facilities and programs for families

- Day camps
- Pool & swimming lessons
- Winter activities
- Movie nights
- Nature hikes & outdoor programs



Programs for adults

- Fitness classes
- Nutrition education
- Swimming lessons
- Yoga
- Evening/weekend recreation programs



Other facilities and programs

- Community/rec center
- Gardening programs
- Childcare
- Indoor walking tracks
- Improved biking & walking trails



We also gathered that residents in Ramsey **currently utilize community centers, YMCAs, and other facilities in neighboring cities** including Andover, Elk River, Rogers, Champlin, and Otsego **for family/child-oriented programming**. Residents have also shared their preference for **sports and fitness programs provided by the City** over the long-term fee-based services offered by athletic associations and private fitness clubs.

Opportunities for Partnerships

Partnerships can offer **valuable and cost-effective strategies for expanding and supplementing programming and facilities** offered by the City. However, they should fit within the community's needs and align well with the City's overall goals. Partnerships should also provide the City with a high-level of control over programs, services, and rates to ensure affordability and accessibility to all residents.

- Government entities**  
e.g., Parks and Recreation Department, neighboring cities
- Nonprofit organizations**  
e.g., YMCA Twin Cities, Youth First Community of Promise
- Schools**  
e.g., Ramsey Elementary, PACT Charter School
- Private fitness & athletic clubs**  
e.g., Adrenaline Sports Center, Anytime Fitness
- Local businesses**  
e.g., Fountains of Ramsey, Links at Northfolk Golf Course

Opportunities for Funding and Managing Costs

Ramsey should explore **diverse funding streams** in addition to City funds to support community center services. Having multiple sources of funding can effectively **address cost issues related to construction, operation, maintenance, programming, and facility updates**. Below are several opportunities that can potentially be used to finance community center services and ensure the continuity of programs.

- Facility use agreements**  
e.g., Ramsey elementary, PACT Charter School
- Grants from government/public entities**  
e.g., Land & Water Conservation Fund, Ramsey Foundation
- Grants from private/nonprofit entities**  
e.g., Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce, Ramsey Lions
- Facility re-use programs/policy**  
e.g., community-based organizations and service providers
- Donations & fundraisers**  
e.g., in-kind and monetary donations, walk-a-thon fundraisers

A Framework for Selecting a Site for a Centralized Community Center or Hub



**Assets:** What does the site bring as an asset?  
e.g. large site, easy access, parking space



**Gaps:** What gaps does the site have?  
e.g. no room for expansion, not centrally located



**Benefits:** What are the advantages of choosing this site?  
e.g. adjacent to playground, can incorporate park



**Consequences:** What are the negative impacts of using this site?  
e.g. increased traffic, loss of trees



**Action Needed:** What has to be done to ensure that all needs are met?  
e.g. determine wetland mitigation, street and sidewalk modifications



**Partnerships:** What are some options for partnerships?  
e.g. formal agreements with YMCA, school district, senior center, and local businesses



**Funding Options:** What funding options are available?  
e.g. donations, sponsorships, cost-sharing agreements, fundraisers

Note: This framework is adapted from the City of Bloomington's *Community Center Taskforce Report to the Bloomington City Council* (Oct. 10, 2016). For more information see: <http://bit.ly/2zDNixG>

Recommended Next Steps

